

Introduction

Rethinking Earliest Christianity in Alexandria

A gloom seems to billow like a fog over the earliest Alexandrian church history, and scholars have but rarely espied more than a candle light glistening over the deep. The dictum of Adolf von Harnack is often on historians' lips: "The worst gap in our knowledge of early church history is our almost total ignorance of the history of Christianity in Alexandria and Egypt ... up until 180 AD."¹ Other scholars offer somewhat rueful restatements: "The obscurity that veils the early history of the Church in Egypt ... does not lift until the beginning of the third century";² "there are only the sketchiest indications of the presence of Christianity in Alexandria before the last years of the second century";³ "we hear next to nothing of an Alexandrian Christian *community* until the end of the second century."⁴

¹ Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans. James Moffatt, 2 vols. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1908), 2.158 ("Die empfindlichste Lücke in unserem Wissen von der ältesten Kirchengeschichte ist unsere fast vollständige Unkenntnis der Geschichte des Christentums in Alexandria und Ägypten ... bis zum Jahre c. 180").

² Colin Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1.

³ Roger S. Bagnall, ed., *Roman Egypt: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 152.

⁴ Martin Ritter, "Das frühchristliche Alexandrien im Spannungsfeld zwischen Judenchristentum, 'Frühkatholizismus' und Gnosis – zur Ortsbestimmung clementisch-alexandrinischer Theologie," in *Charisma und Caritas: Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Alten Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 117–138 at 125: "Gleichwohl ist bis zum Ende des zweiten Jahrhunderts so gut wie nichts von einer alexandrinischen Christengemeinde zur hören" (emphasis in original). Cf. also Malcolm Choat, Jitse Dijkstra, Christopher Haas, and William Tabbernee, "The World of the Nile," in *Early Christianity in Contexts: An Exploration across Cultures and Continents*, ed. William Tabbernee (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 181–222 at 207.

For some historians, the history of Christianity in Alexandria does not genuinely begin until the rise of Demetrius as bishop in 189 CE.⁵ In a widely cited history, Joseph Mélèze Modrzejewski refers to “the sudden emergence of an Alexandrian Christian community, sprung up overnight” in the Severan period (late second–early third century CE).⁶ Problematically, this observation all too easily bypasses Christian figures like Basilides, Isidore, Carpocrates, Epiphane, Marcellina, Valentinus, Julius Cassianus, Prodicus, and other Christian thinkers in early to mid-second-century Alexandria.

Perhaps all this is to be expected. Experts in patristics have traditionally focused on those figures that were received as “orthodox” by the father of church history, Eusebius of Caesarea (263–339 CE). Eusebius focused on Pantaenus, Clement, Demetrius, and Origen as his religious forbearers in Alexandria. This book, by contrast, focuses on the Christian texts and figures that have been, until recently, shunted into the category of “apocryphal,” “gnostic,” and “heretical.” The focus, in other words, is on figures whom Eusebius did not recognize as fathers of his Christian group in the early fourth century CE.

To be sure, the frequent lament that we lack sources for Alexandrian Christianity prior to 180 CE is justified to a certain degree. In my estimation, however, the darkness is often overdrawn. Samuel Rubenson, for example, remarks that “there is almost no information in any sources about Christianity in Alexandria until the end of the second century A.D.”⁷ In fact, there are considerable sources indicating Alexandrian Christian figures and movements prior to 200. Some of these sources, such as the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, have been known for a long time. Others, such as the *Letter of Eugnostus*, have more recently appeared from the Nag Hammadi codices. Naturally, one can dispute whether these works are Alexandrian, but one cannot dispute, I think, the relevance of Alexandrian works from the likes of

⁵ Stephen J. Davis, for instance, leaps from “Saint Mark to Demetrius” in *The Early Coptic Papacy: The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2004), 1–20. A similar leap occurs in Lois M. Farag, “The Early Christian Period (42–642): The Spread and Defense of the Christian Faith under Roman Rule,” in *The Coptic Christian Heritage: History, Faith and Culture*, ed. Lois M. Farag (London: Routledge, 2014), 23–38.

⁶ Joseph Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt from Ramses II to Emperor Trajan*, trans. Robert Cornman (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 227.

⁷ Samuel Rubenson, “From School to Patriarchate: Aspects on the Christianisation of Alexandria,” in *Alexandria: A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot*, ed. George Hinge and Jens A. Krasilnikoff (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2009), 144–157 at 145.

Basilides, Carpocrates, Epiphanes, and Julius Cassianus. Of course, the works of such figures exist in fragments and polemical summaries – but when combined and critically sifted, the data are substantial and worthy of more scholarly attention.

BAUER AND HIS CRITICS

Every scholar of early Christianity knows Walter Bauer's theory about the predominance of "gnostic" forms of Christianity in first- and second-century Egypt. Bauer's influential paradigm continues to inform research till this day.⁸ A fairly current statement by the seasoned patrologist Manlio Simonetti basically confirms Bauer's view. Simonetti writes:

The sparse evidence we have [for earliest Christianity in Alexandria] does allow us to hypothesize a virtually absolute cultural dominance of the gnostics for a good part of the 2nd c., especially of those who professed more philosophically elaborate doctrines and were also the most Christianized (Basilides, Valentinus and his disciples); this is not surprising if we consider how the culturally syncretistic tendencies of the gnostics harmonized with the intellectual vivacity of cultured Alexandria and the different influences at work there (Greek philosophical doctrines, Hellenized Judaism, Eastern religions, apocalyptic literature). Gnosticism presented itself as a kind of superior knowledge with respect to that of the ordinary Christian and thus took hold, esp. among the more cultured and intellectually ambitious of Christian society who were also those of higher social status.⁹

Simonetti's remarks are astute. Since his time, however, many scholars have – rightly, in my view – jettisoned the macro-category "Gnosticism."¹⁰ They do so for many reasons. Labeling Valentinus, Basilides, and other teachers "G/gnostics" obscures their more patent Christian identity. "Gnosticism" has in the past been viewed as a religion in its own right,

⁸ It appears prominently in works like Bart Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁹ Manlio Simonetti, "Alexandria," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, Volume 1, A–E, ed. Angelo di Berardino (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 78–81 at 79. According to Birger Pearson, "Christian Gnosticism, in various manifestations, was the dominant form of Christianity in Alexandria until the last quarter of the second century, particularly during the last decade" ("Earliest Christianity in Egypt," in *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social Context: Essays in Honor of David W. Johnson*, ed. James E. Goehring and Janet A. Timbie [Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2007], 97–112 at 111).

¹⁰ Michael Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2003).

distinct from both early Judaism and Christianity.¹¹ “Gnostic” became a heresiological label for a great variety of groups with a whole panoply of characteristics (dualism, anticosmism, an evil creator, the notion of a divine spark, and so on).¹² It is almost impossible to control which characteristics filter into the larger category of “Gnosticism,” despite the fact that some scholars have tried to offer more nuanced definitions of the phenomenon.¹³ Recent studies have convincingly shown that figures such as Basilides, Valentinus, and Carpocrates were not “gnostic” since they do not match the predetermined and often negatively colored features of “Gnosticism.”¹⁴

While Bauer’s paradigm must be redrawn, his advances need not be discarded. Recently, Bauer’s notions of “doctrinal pluriformity” in Alexandria and the prominence of “individual teachers” has been dismissed as a “neatly drawn conspiracy theory.”¹⁵ To be sure, one could overly emphasize the idea that later theologians wanted to drown the voices of early Alexandrian theologians who did not conform to later ideals. At the same time, I do not find anything conspiratorial about the claim that the earliest known Christian theologians in Alexandria – indeed, the earliest known speculative theologians anywhere – were Valentinus, Basilides, and Carpocrates, all of whom are dated by Clement to the reign of Hadrian (117–138 CE).¹⁶ Prodicus apparently appeared somewhat

¹¹ Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1963); Gilles Quispel, *Gnosis als Weltreligion: Die Bedeutung der Gnosis in der Antike*, 3rd ed. (Bern: Origo, 1995); Birger Pearson, “Gnosticism as a Religion,” in *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 201–223.

¹² Ugo Bianchi, ed., *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina 13–18 Aprile 1966* (Leiden: Brill, 1967).

¹³ Christoph Marksches, *Gnosis: An Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 16–17; April D. DeConick, “Crafting Gnosis: Gnostic Spirituality in the Ancient New Age,” in *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World: Essays in Honour of John D. Turner*, ed. Kevin Corrigan and Tuomas Rasimus, NHMS 82 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 287–305.

¹⁴ Christoph Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins*, WUNT 65 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992); Winrich A. Löhr, *Basilides und seine Schule: Eine Studie zur Theologie- und Kirchengeschichte des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, WUNT 83 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996); M. David Litwa, *Carpocrates, Marcellina and Epiphane: Three Early Christian Teachers of Alexandria and Rome* (London: Routledge, 2022).

¹⁵ Tabbernee, et al., “World of the Nile,” 207. See further Thomas Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church* (Lewiston: Mellen, 1988).

¹⁶ Clement, *Strom.* 7.17.106.4–7.17.107.1.

later, as did Julius Cassianus, Isidore (Basilides's son), Marcellina, and Epiphanes (the last two being disciples of Carpocrates).

So the question still looms: Was Bauer on the right track when he discussed earliest Christianity in Alexandria? The only way to answer this question is to do something not often done these days – to engage directly with Bauer's work, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*. When one takes a fresh look at his chapter on Egypt, there is a mix of both surprise and dismay. Bauer began by lamenting the darkness obscuring earliest Alexandrian Christianity. Yet he barely mentioned Basilides, Carpocrates, Isidore, Julius Cassianus, and other known Alexandrian theologians.¹⁷ Instead, he turned to Eusebius. Some of Bauer's remarks on this score have become famous (for instance, that the names of Eusebius's Alexandrian bishops are, until 189 CE, "a mere echo and a puff of smoke").¹⁸ Generally speaking, however, statements about the "deathly silence" of earliest Alexandrian church history were already hackneyed and do not take us very far.¹⁹

Bauer tried to eliminate sources for reconstructing earliest Alexandrian Christianity. He rightly rejected as spurious the letter of Hadrian to Servianus as quoted by "Flavius Vopiscus" in the fourth-century *Historia Augusta*.²⁰ Surprisingly, Bauer attempted to discard the *Epistle of Barnabas* – not because it was not Alexandrian, but because it was not (or is not) "orthodox." Today, his arguments in this regard seem particularly weak: *Barnabas* "seems docetic" and its Christology contains nothing "anti-heretical."²¹ The first claim is incorrect and the latter is one of Bauer's (in)famous arguments from silence.

¹⁷ Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 48–49.

¹⁸ A century ago Andreas Heckel tried to show numerical patterns in the lists of Alexandrian bishops (*Die Kirche von Ägypten: Ihre Anfänge, ihre Organisation und ihre Entwicklung bis zur Zeit des Nicänum* [Strasbourg: J.S.Ed. Heitz, 1918], 13–43). The *Suda* (1.4695) says that the Alexandrian novel writer Achilles "Staius" (aka "Tatius") became a Christian bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) – a development that would interrupt the neat list of bishops (re)produced by Eusebius.

¹⁹ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy* 45.

²⁰ SHA, *Vita Saturnini* 8. See further Alessandro Galimberti, "The pseudo-Hadrianic Epistle in the *Historia Augusta* and Hadrian's Religious Policy," in *Hadrian and the Christians*, ed. Marco Rizzi (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 111–120; Francesco Massa, "Devotees of Serapis and Christ? A Literary Representation of Religious Cohabitations in the 4th Cent.," in *Beyond Conflicts: Cultural and Religious Cohabitations in Alexandria and Egypt between the First and the Sixth Century CE*, ed. Luca Arcari, STAC 103 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 263–282.

²¹ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy* 47–48.

Another of Bauer's arguments is better known, yet no less problematic: Since the *Gospel According to the Egyptians* arose in Egypt, and since it is "heretical," earliest Egyptian Christianity must also have been heretical.²² At present, one winces to see a person of Bauer's intellectual stature make such a simplistic and value-laden argument. Yet it gets worse: The *Gospel of the Hebrews* – which has "nothing to do" with the *Gospel of the Hebrews* mentioned by Jerome and Epiphanius – must have been written by "Jewish Christians of Alexandria."²³ This means, according to Bauer, that the *Gospel According to the Egyptians* was written by Gentile Christians, who also were also "gnostic."

Today, these arguments appear erroneous because they are based on wrong assumptions: First, that we can separate, in a vast cosmopolis like Alexandria, a distinct Jewish and Gentile Christian mindset; and second, that we can speak of a concrete division between "orthodoxy" and "heresy" in this period. Bauer of course knew that these "two types of Christianity were not yet at all clearly differentiated from each other," but he still used "orthodoxy" and "heresy" as his main analytical categories.²⁴ As most scholars today acknowledge, the use of these – essentially religious – categories are anachronistically applied to first- and second-century forms of Christianity.

If we abandon the "orthodoxy vs. heresy" binary, we can begin to evaluate the accuracy of Bauer's smaller claims. To my mind, for instance, Bauer was basically correct that orthodox Christians of the fourth century CE and beyond wanted (selectively) to forget certain figures in earliest Alexandrian Christianity or to categorize them as something other than Christian.

EUSEBIUS

Take, for instance, Eusebius. Eusebius had many aims in writing his *Ecclesiastical History*. One of these was to define those whom he considered to be Christians – to relate their story, and to disqualify certain competitors as "savage wolves" (*Acts* 20:29).²⁵ Sometimes Eusebius mentioned these perceived competitors – people such as Simon of Samaria, Basilides, Marcion, and Carpocrates. Yet there are several – and

²² Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy* 50.

²³ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy* 51–52.

²⁴ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy* 59.

²⁵ Eusebius, *HE* 1.1.1.

several distinctly Alexandrian – figures whom Eusebius did not mention at all. One will look in vain, for instance, for Isidore (son of Basilides), Epiphanes (son of Carpocrates), Marcellina (disciple of Carpocrates), Prodicus, and Julius Cassianus.²⁶ It is also significant that Eusebius omitted Ptolemy and Heracleon (disciples of Valentinus), who seem to have spent time in Alexandria. All these figures are missing – despite the fact that Eusebius knew them from his reading of Irenaeus and Clement.

When Eusebius did not have data for earliest Alexandrian Christianity, he chose to report his own party's late and unreliable foundation legend. According to Eusebius, Mark the evangelist was the first missionary and bishop of Alexandria, a legend that was not apparently known to two of the most famous Alexandrian theologians, Clement and Origen. Both of these theologians – despite their voluminous literary remains – never mentioned it. (Nor, significantly, did Irenaeus or the mid-third-century Alexandrian bishop Dionysius.) Eusebius cited no specific source for his legend, transmitting only a vague report led by “they say” (φασίν):²⁷

They say that this Mark was the first dispatched to Egypt to preach the gospel which he had composed, and that he was the first to found churches at Alexandria itself. In that place such a vast multitude of men and women who believed came together at the first attempt in such a philosophic and serious discipline that Philo decided to inscribe their studies, meetings, banquets, and their whole mode of life.²⁸

Eusebius here referred to Philo of Alexandria's *Contemplative Life*, which described a Jewish ascetic group in the mid-first century (the “Therapeutae”).²⁹ No contemporary historian, to my knowledge,

²⁶ Eusebius may refer to Julius Cassianus as a chronographer in *HE* 6.13.7, but he did not seem to recognize him as the one attacked by Clement in *Strom.* 3.13.91–95.

²⁷ Melissa (formerly Philip) Sellev noted the problem: “Eusebius's typical use of the verb φασί seems to be to report traditions for which he has no clear written authority ... it would be more precise to say that Eusebius normally cites a tradition with the verb φασί when repeating oral legends” (“Eusebius and the Gospels,” in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. Harold Attridge and Gohei Hata [Leiden: Brill, 1992], 110–138 at 117). Ilaria L. E. Ramelli argues that since Eusebius did not mention the Alexandria connection in *Dem. Ev.* 3.5.89–95, the report about Mark in Alexandria must have come from Clement (“The Birth of the Rome-Alexandria Connection: The Early Sources on Mark and Philo and the Petrine Tradition,” *SPhA* 23 [2011]: 69–95 at 77–78). This is neither a necessary nor a plausible deduction.

²⁸ Eusebius, *HE* 2.16.1–2.

²⁹ See further David M. Hay, “Foil for the Therapeutae: References to Other Texts and Persons in Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa*,” in *Neotestamentica et Philonica: Studies in Honor of Peder Borgen*, ed. David Aune, Torrey Seland, and Jarl Henning Ulrichsen (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 330–348; Mary Ann Beavis, “Philo's Therapeutai: Philosopher's

believes that the Therapeutae – despite the insistence of Eusebius – were Christians. Some scholars doubt the very existence of the Therapeutae.³⁰ The claim connected to it – that Mark came to Alexandria – can be firmly traced no earlier than Eusebius.³¹ Other fourth-century sources were unfamiliar with this foundation legend, for example the author of the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*.³²

Eusebius's (sub)apostolic founding of Alexandria may reflect developments in his own time. If we examine his *Chronicle*, we note that by 42 CE, Eusebius had Peter installed as first bishop of Rome. The very next year, Peter's "interpreter," Mark, announced his gospel in Alexandria (43 CE). This was one year before the first bishop of Antioch, Evodius, was installed in that city.³³ Thus we have an implicit episcopal ranking of the churches in Eusebius's day: first Rome, then Alexandria – who receives Peter's "son" Mark (1 *Pet* 5:13) – then Antioch. In terms of chronology, 43 CE seems a bit late for the debut of the Jesus movement(s) in Alexandria. If *Acts* 2:10 presents a plausible scenario (people from "Egypt" hear Peter on Pentecost), then Jews on pilgrimage from Egypt to Jerusalem should have brought back lore about Jesus to Egypt between 30 and 35 CE – assuming the date of Jesus's death to be around 30 CE.³⁴

Dream or Utopian Construction," *JSP* 14.1 (2004): 30–42; Joan E. Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's Therapeutae Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). On Eusebius's reception of the Therapeutae, see David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 216–222; Sabrina Inowlocki, "Eusebius of Caesarea's *Interpretatio Christiana* of Philo's *De vita contemplativa*," *HTR* 97:3 (2004): 305–328; Joan E. Taylor and David M. Hay, *Philo of Alexandria on the Contemplative Life: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, PACS 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 45–51.

³⁰ Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa* as a Philosopher's Dream," *JSJ* 30:1 (1999): 40–64; cf. Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Unreliable Witnesses: Religion, Gender, and History in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 57–116.

³¹ The evidence of Clement's *Letter to Theodore* reputedly discovered by Morton Smith in 1958 must be bracketed because the letter is a suspected forgery of the fourth or twentieth century. See Litwa, *Carpocrates* 163–200; Geoffrey S. Smith and Brent C. Landau, *The Secret Gospel of Mark: A Controversial Scholar, a Scandalous Gospel of Jesus, and the Fierce Debate over Its Authenticity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023).

³² Ps.-Clement, *Hom.* 1.8.3–1.14.7.

³³ Rudolf Helm, ed., *Eusebius Werke Siebenter Band – Die Chronik des Hieronymus: Hieronymi Chronicon* (Berlin: Akademie, 1956), 179. The Armenian version presents the date of Mark's arrival as 41 CE (A. Schöne, ed. *Eusebii Chronicorum canonum quae supersunt* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1866]).

³⁴ Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, trans. Doug Stott (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 52–58.

One suspects that the Mark legend is a countertradition crafted to oppose the assertion that Glaucias came to Alexandria and taught Basilides, the first known speculative Christian theologian of Alexandria.³⁵ Both Glaucias and Mark were said not only to be disciples of Peter; they were both named his “interpreter.”³⁶ Accordingly, both were thought to be (sub)apostolic missionaries to Alexandria. The Glaucias tradition is attested by Clement who ascribed the datum to Basilides himself. Clement wrote more than a century before Eusebius. Basilides, by Eusebius’s own reckoning, was Hadrianic (117–138 CE).

Obviously we are gazing into the mirror of reception; there is no reliable evidence that “apostolic” missionaries came to Alexandria at all. The push to make Alexandria an apostolic foundation can be traced to the early second century CE. The author of *Acts* strove hard to find apostolic founders for many areas: Peter and John for Samaria (*Acts* 8), Peter for Joppa and Caesarea (*Acts* 10), Paul for Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome (*Acts* 18–19, 28). If he could have found an apostolic founder for Alexandria, presumably he would have. The fact is, the author of *Acts* shows almost no interest in Alexandria (see Chapter 2).

In light of these problems, it is intriguing to hear a modern historian such as Birger Pearson observe that “Eusebius’s instinct [in *HE* 2.17.2] is correct ... when he stresses that the ‘apostolic men’ in Alexandria during Philo’s time were ‘of Hebrew origin and thus still preserved most of the ancient customs in a strictly Jewish manner.’” Pearson added some cautionary remarks, affirming, as is customary, the lack of secure data. In the end, however, he still concluded that “there can hardly be any question that the earliest missionaries to Alexandria were Jews coming from Jerusalem and that the earliest Christian converts were Jews.”³⁷

³⁵ Clement, *Strom.* 7.17.106.4. See the comments of Löhr, *Basilides* 19–23. In his Chronicle, Eusebius had Basilides “sojourn” (*commoratur*) in Alexandria in 132 CE (Helm, *Chronik* 201). This does not mean that Basilides only appeared at this date.

³⁶ Γλαυκιαν ... τὸν Πέτρου ἐρμηνέα (Basilides in Clement, *Strom.* 7.17.106.4). Μάρκος μὲν ἐρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου (Papias in Eusebius, *HE* 3.39.15). Löhr considers the Mark-as-interpreter tradition earlier than the Glaucias-as-interpreter tradition because the former comes from Papias (“Christliche ‘Gnostiker’ in Alexandria im zweiten Jahrhundert,” in *Alexandria*, ed. Tobias Georges, Felix Albrecht, and Reinhard Feldmeier [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013], 413–433 at 420). But Basilideans would not have tried to compete with the Papian tradition, since Papias never placed Mark in Alexandria. I disagree with Bentley Layton (“The Significance of Basilides in Ancient Christian Thought,” *Representations* 28 [1989]: 135–151 at 146) that Glaucias was τὸν Πέτρου ἐρμηνέα because he interpreted 1 *Peter*.

³⁷ Birger Pearson, “Christians and Jews in First-Century Alexandria,” in *Gnosticism and Christianity* 82–99 at 88. Cf. Ramelli, “Rome–Alexandria Connection,” 78–79. Despite

In fact, we can question both points on the grounds that Pearson himself stated: There is simply no reliable evidence. The tradition that “Mark,” a Jerusalemite Jew (*Acts* 12:12), came to Alexandria and converted those who became the Therapeutae is, for all we know, miles away from the truth. The Egyptians mentioned in *Acts* 2:10 were not missionaries, they are not called Alexandrians, and they may, after immigrating, have been permanent residents in Jerusalem (*Acts* 2:5).³⁸

So why would a scholar such as Pearson follow Eusebius’s fourth-century “instinct”? The answer, it seems, is the work that Pearson cites: the 1979 study of Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*. In this short work, Roberts argued, against Bauer, that Valentinus and Basilides must have been part of a larger context of “orthodox” Christian teachers – even though there is no early second-century evidence for those later recognized as “orthodox” until Pantaenus about 180 CE.³⁹ Roberts further argued that there are no “Gnostic papyri” during the first two centuries, with the exception of an Oxyrhynchus fragment from the *Gospel of Thomas*.⁴⁰ (Third-century fragments of the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ* are extant, among several other Christian gospels.)⁴¹

In my view, it is wrong to call Robert’s point “a powerful argument” against Bauer’s view for several reasons.⁴² First of all, “Gnostic” (which

refinements, Pearson’s thesis has remained consistent over the years. See his “Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Some Observations,” in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. Birger Pearson and James E. Goehring (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 132–160; Birger Pearson, “Gnosticism in Early Egyptian Christianity,” in *Gnosticism, Judaism and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 194–214; Birger Pearson, “Cracking a Conundrum: Christian Origins in Egypt,” *Studia Theologica* 57 (2003): 61–75. Similar views are put forward by Attila Jakab, *Ecclesia alexandrina: Évolution sociale et institutionnelle du christianisme alexandrin (IIe et IIIe siècles)* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2001), 49–53.

³⁸ The list of peoples in *Acts* 2:7–11 seems originally to have identified major Jewish communities in the Diaspora. For its function, see J. A. Brinkman, “The Literary Background of the ‘Catalogue of Nations’ (*Acts* 2,9–11),” *CBQ* 25 (1963): 418–427; A. J. M. Wedderburn, “Traditions and Redaction in *Acts* 2.1–13,” *JSNT* 55 (1994): 27–54; G. Gilbert, “The List of Nations in *Acts* 2: Roman Propaganda and the Lukan Response,” in *JBL* 121 (2002): 497–529.

³⁹ Roberts, *Manuscript* 50–51.

⁴⁰ Roberts, *Manuscript* 51–52; Lincoln H. Blumell and Thomas A. Wayment, ed. *Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015), 238–241.

⁴¹ See further Joseph van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1976), 99–220; Cornelia Römer, “Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Papyri,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 623–643 at 626–632.

⁴² Pace David Brakke, “The East (2): Egypt and Palestine,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 344–363 at 347.

Roberts capitalized) is a problematic category. Probably no persons and almost certainly no papyri can be stably labeled “Gnostic,” since virtually all the criteria for determining what is “Gnostic” are contested. Second, the papyrological evidence is unevenly preserved and not representative of Alexandria or of Egypt as a whole. We simply do not know what early Christians were reading in second-century Alexandria because the papyrological evidence for this city has virtually disappeared. Third, if only literature later deemed canonical survived, that would not prove that the literature was “gnostic” or “orthodox,” because Christians of all sorts used this literature.⁴³ It was the *interpretation* of books such as *Genesis* and *John* that matters for Roberts’s observations, not the texts themselves.⁴⁴ Second-century readers of the *Gospel of Thomas* would not have called themselves “unorthodox.” And figures later claimed for “orthodoxy” – such as Clement – might have selectively approved the material from the *Gospel of Thomas* just as he did with the *Gospel According to the Egyptians*.⁴⁵ (As is widely known, *Thomas* overlaps considerably with Synoptic material, widely considered authoritative by Clement’s time.)

Incidentally, a similar point applies to the well-known discovery of a fragment of Irenaeus’s *Against Heresies* (P.Oxy 405), which has long been dated to the late second or early third century CE.⁴⁶ Roberts dated this papyrus to the late second century, famously remarking that “Irenaeus’ treatise *Adversus Haereses* ... reached Oxyrhynchus not long after the ink was dry on the author’s manuscript.”⁴⁷ Roberts took the papyrus to be evidence of “the orthodox reaction against Gnosticism.”⁴⁸ His interpretation is often repeated.⁴⁹

Problematically, Roberts had no sure knowledge about who was using Irenaeus’s manuscript and for what purpose. Perhaps this papyrus was

⁴³ Roberts later admitted this point: “the strength of Gnosticism cannot be simply estimated by the ratio of specifically Gnostic books to others, and the striking number of texts both of the Fourth Gospel and of *Genesis* may well reflect the strength of Gnosticism” (*Manuscript* 60).

⁴⁴ Gerhard Luttikhuisen, *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories and Early Jesus Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Tuomas Rasimus, ed., *The Legacy of John: Second-Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel* (Leiden: Brill 2009); Juan Chapa, “The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Gospel of John in Egypt,” VC 64 (2010): 327–352.

⁴⁵ Clement, *Strom.* 3.13.92.2–3.13.93.3.

⁴⁶ Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus* 287–290.

⁴⁷ Roberts, *Manuscript* 53.

⁴⁸ Roberts, *Manuscript* 53.

⁴⁹ Tabbernee, for instance, claims that “[t]he interest in heterodox interpretations of Christianity is confirmed by a page from Irenaeus’s *Adversus haereses* (L[euven]

in Rome during the late second century and only came to Egypt in the third (or later). Or perhaps the readers of this papyrus did not in fact support Irenaeus's point of view and they read *Against Heresies* in order to refute it. The point is that we cannot make the error of inferring from a material artifact something about the religious mindset of its users. We do not actually know which Christians used the papyri dating from the second and third centuries, and thus we are not in a position to judge their affiliation.⁵⁰

It should, finally, be noted that the earliest Christian papyri in Egypt date from the late second century. No Christian papyri, to my knowledge, reliably dates to the late first or even to the early second century CE – the crucial time for Christian origins in Alexandria. P⁵² (P^{Ryl}. 3.45752), the famous fragment of *John* 19, is not an exception,⁵¹ as Brent Nongbri has shown.⁵² It is unwise, then, to make any firm conclusions about the nature of earliest Christianity and/or Christians in Alexandria from the surviving papyri.

Robert's argument based on the *nomina sacra* in the papyri also falls short of cogency. The papyrologist was already skating on thin ice when he opined that the *nomina sacra* derived from the Jerusalem church – a church that Roberts imagined as a center of translocal Christian authority by about 50 CE.⁵³ In this case, Roberts seems to have assumed the idealistic history of *Acts*. Yet the apologetic history of

D[atabase] of A[ncient] B[ooks] 2459 [II/III]), being read in Oxyrhynchus within decades of its composition in Gaul" ("World of the Nile" 190). See also Theodore Hall Patrick, *Traditional Egyptian Christianity: A History of the Coptic Orthodox Church* (Greensboro: Fisher Park Press, 1996), 4.

⁵⁰ See further Roger S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); AnneMarie Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Brent Nongbri, *God's Library: The Archaeology of Early Christian Manuscripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

⁵¹ Pace Wilfred C. Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity from Its Origins to 451 CE* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 25–26; Simon C. Mimouni, "À la recherche de la communauté chrétienne d'Alexandrie aux I-II siècles," in *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*, ed. L. Perrone (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 137–164 at 145.

⁵² Brent Nongbri, "The Use and Abuse of P⁵²: Papyrological Pitfalls in the Dating of the Fourth Gospel," *HTR* 98:1 (2005): 23–48; Nongbri, "Paleography, Precision and Publicity: Further Thoughts on Ryl. III.457 (P⁵²)," *NTS* 66 (2020): 471–499; Pasquale Orsini and Willy Clarysse, "Early New Testament Manuscripts and Their Dates: A Critique of Theological Paleography," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 88:4 (2012): 443–474.

⁵³ Roberts, *Manuscript* 44–46.

Acts, which could be as late as the mid-second century, cannot be used as evidence that the *nomina sacra* developed in a Christian scriptorium of Jerusalem.⁵⁴

Still, Roberts concluded that since the *nomina sacra* appear in the earliest Christian papyri (found in Egypt), they prove the connection of the Egyptian church(es) to the Judeo-Christian church in Jerusalem. This hypothetical connection, based on a shaky and speculative theory – even if granted – can only tell us about the late second century when the earliest surviving *nomina* appear. The *nomina sacra* confirm nothing about Alexandrian Christianity in the first and early second centuries CE.

Perhaps it should also be mentioned that, although Roberts's arguments have often been invoked to refute Bauer, Roberts himself did not view matters this way. Naturally, Roberts disagreed with Bauer insofar as he took him to be saying that, up until about 150 CE, the Alexandrian church was solely or, as Roberts puts it, "essentially Gnostic." (Bauer in fact acknowledged diversity as can be seen in his argument about two different communities using the *Gospel According to the Hebrews* and the *Gospel According to the Egyptians*.) Yet Roberts himself observed that "down to the middle of the second century or beyond ... Gnosticism was undoubtedly very influential."⁵⁵ He later noted that "for much of the second century it [the Alexandrian church] was a church with no strong central authority and little organization; one of the directions in which it developed was certainly Gnosticism, but a Gnosticism not initially separated from the rest of the Church."⁵⁶

These comments retain validity but are problematically formulated. Roberts presupposed a binary between "Gnosticism" and "the Church," which, according to him, were ideologically – but not sociologically – separate. This false binary is exactly what invalidates many of Roberts's other arguments. For example, Roberts claimed the *nomina sacra* for "orthodoxy" on the grounds that they include "Old Testament terms such as Israel and David."⁵⁷ Roberts assumed that "Gnostics" rejected the Old Testament and would not have sacralized these terms. His inference is based on an overgeneralization, namely "Gnostic" hostility to the Old Testament. If Roberts had studied actual texts that he classified as "Gnostic," he would have seen, in many cases, extensive engagement

⁵⁴ See nn. 59–60.

⁵⁵ Roberts, *Manuscript* 43.

⁵⁶ Roberts, *Manuscript* 71.

⁵⁷ Roberts, *Manuscript* 43.

with the Old Testament as scripture (among the Valentinians, Julius Cassianus, and the Naassenes, for instance).

According to Roberts, “Gnostics” used the *nomina sacra*, but they did not invent them. Yet I see no reason why a scribe in the circle of Valentinus, working about 125 CE, could not have invented some of the *nomina sacra* – including the abbreviations for “Israel” and “Jerusalem.”⁵⁸ Early Christians, of course, had all manner of theories about “the true Israel” and the “Jerusalem above.” In fact, one can turn Roberts’s argument on its head: Perhaps a Valentinian or a student of Eugnostus sacralized the term ἄνθρωπος (“human”), because he or she considered ἄνθρωπος to be a divine entity (the famous “God-Human”).⁵⁹ Or perhaps a Valentinian created the abbreviation for μήτηρ out of reverence for Mother Wisdom. If so, later “orthodox” scribes would have, in these cases, accepted “gnostic” *nomina sacra*, not the reverse. In the end, however, we do better simply to jettison a dualism between “gnostic” and “orthodox.”⁶⁰

To be fair, Roberts was a careful scholar and a fine papyrologist. It should be pointed out, however, that when he ventured into the thickets of earliest Alexandrian Christian history, his inferences were not reliable. Accordingly, when later historians – most of whom are not experts in papyrology – almost uniformly appeal to and accept Roberts’s inferences without much interrogation, there is cause for concern.⁶¹

⁵⁸ For the Valentinian use of Israel and Jerusalem, see Clement, *Exc.* 56.5; *Apoc. Paul* (V,2) 18.5, 18 (the latter line reconstructed).

⁵⁹ Roberts knew of the “Gnostic usage” of ἄνθρωπος, but he vouched for an “orthodox” derivation from “Jesus as Son of Man” (*Manuscript* 40). Roberts’s theory has been undermined by Christopher Tuckett, “‘Nomina Sacra’: Yes and No?,” in *The Biblical Canons*, ed. J. M. Auwers and H. J. de Jonge (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 431–458 at 451–452.

⁶⁰ Larry W. Hurtado’s treatment of the *nomina sacra* continues in the speculative and theological vein of Roberts (*The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 95–134). See further S. D. Charlesworth, “Consensus Standardization in the Systematic Approach to ‘Nomina Sacra’ in Second- and Third-Century Gospel Manuscripts,” *Aegyptus* 86 (2006): 37–68; Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord* 57–80; Kristin de Troyer, “The Pronunciation of the Name of God with Some Notes regarding Nomina Sacra,” in *Gott Nennen: Gottes Namen und Gott als Name*, ed. Ingold U. Dalferth and Phillip Stoellger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 143–172.

⁶¹ Many scholars have appealed to Roberts against Bauer, e.g., Jakob, *Ecclesia alexandrina* 61; Mimouni, “À la recherche,” 148; Patrick, *Traditional Egyptian Christianity* 3; James Carleton Paget, *Jews, Christians, and Jewish Christians in Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 137, n.89; Löhr, “Christliche ‘Gnostiker,’” 413; Michael Kok, *Gospel on the Margins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 168; Benjamin Schliesser, “Jewish Beginnings,” in *Alexandria: Hub of the Hellenistic World*, ed. Benjamin Schliesser et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 390–391.

THESES AND ROADMAP

Now that we have set the scholarly scene, it is time to relate the plan of this book. This is not a history of Alexandria as such. Those interested in the broader history of Alexandria – its economy, topography, archaeology, cults, coins (and so on) – can peruse a cornucopia of recent books.⁶² This is a work on earliest Christianity in Alexandria. By no means does it attempt to resurrect Bauer's paradigm. As already seen, it rejects any simplistic binary between "Gnostic" and "orthodox" groups of Jesus's followers in Alexandria. These are later categories mostly imposed on the figures discussed here. In actuality, both types of figures were part of a larger and more complex web of entangled discourses and identities that cannot be simply pried apart. I propose that Christianity in Alexandria, if we call it that, appealed to Gentile populations in Alexandria from a fairly early period (the mid to late first century CE). There were of course Christians in Alexandria who remained Jews both in terms of their ethnic descent and religious practice. In the wake of the Diaspora Revolt (115–117 CE), however, the majority of Alexandrian Christians were multiethnic and not committed to the practice of distinctly Jewish customs (e.g., circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath observance).

Third, Alexandrian Christian theology developed a distinctive character. Instead of emphasizing a crucified messiah, Alexandrian Christian theologians underscored themes that intersected with (mainly Platonic and Jewish) theological tendencies, including an idea of a transcendent God distinct from creative agencies, the manifestation of God as a primal Human (theandry), the transmigration of souls, the rejection of

⁶² E.g., J. G. Milne, *Catalogue of Alexandrian Coins* (New York: Sanford J. Durst, 1982); J. Paul Getty Museum, *Alexandria and Alexandrianism: Papers Delivered at a Symposium Organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities and Held at the Museum April 22–25, 1993* (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996); Jean-Yves Empereur, *Alexandria Rediscovered* (New York: George Braziller, 1998); Roger S. Bagnall and Dominic W. Rathbone, ed., *Egypt from Alexander to the Early Christians: An Archaeological and Historical Guide* (Los Angeles: Paul J. Getty Museum, 2004); Edward J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Judith McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt c. 300 BC to AD 700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Stefan Pfeiffer, *Der römische Kaiser und das Land am Nil: Kaiserverehrung und Kaiserkult in Alexandria und Ägypten von Augustus bis Caracalla (30 v. Chr.–217 n. Chr.)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010); Thomas Landvatter, "Contact Points: Alexandria a Hellenistic Capital of Egypt," in *Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World*, ed. Jeffrey Spier, Timothy Potts and Sara E. Cole (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2018), 128–134.

corruptible flesh, and the deification of the mind. Although there was still no dogmatic unity in Alexandrian theology, theologians of a similar Platonizing bent could lay claim to Christian identity by viewing Jesus as the sage who putatively revealed or transmitted such teachings.

This book is divided into two parts. Part I primarily lays out the case for my second thesis (that early Christianity in Alexandria moved relatively swiftly to recruit Gentile populations). Part II largely focuses on the third thesis, regarding the distinctive kind of Alexandrian Christian thought that emerged especially after the Diaspora Revolt. Thesis one is argued, implicitly and explicitly, throughout the book.

In sum: Christian groups in second-century Alexandria cannot be easily separated from each other whether theologically or sociologically. Instead, a variety of independent teachers competed for attention and followers with no single circle of believers attaining clear (numerical or cultural) dominance.

THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

This volume is primarily based on two sets of data: (1) data from or based on figures that are more or less securely accepted as originating in Alexandria (for instance, Apollos, Basilides, and Julius Cassianus); and (2) data from texts that are arguably, but not certainly, Alexandrian. In the whole scheme of things, data from set (1) will normally trump data from set (2). Nevertheless, I have chosen to include data from set (2) since I believe that, without it, a full history of earliest Christianity in Alexandria cannot be written. Yet since the data in set (2) depend on arguments about provenance, this topic requires some discussion.

Determining provenance is more of an art than a science, but it is an art with rules and method. In this book, there is no pontification on the origins of any text, only hypotheses – for most of the data only allow for hypotheses. Scholarly hypotheses, however, are not like shooting an arrow in the night. The historian is charged to make the best of hypotheses by offering the most probable interpretations of reliable evidence.

Even a superficial dip into scholarly literature will show that there are dozens of texts that scholars, at various times and in manifold ways, have claimed for Alexandria. Some of these claims are based on solid evidence along with reasonable interpretations of it, while some – perhaps even many – are not. In some cases, such as the *Letter of Diognetus*, there is simply insufficient evidence, in my view, to determine provenance. In

other cases, such as the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, the longstanding case for an Alexandrian provenance is surprisingly weak.⁶³ For a limited range of texts, such as *Barnabas*, the hypothesis of an Alexandrian provenance, in my judgment, is strong. In this book, I focus only on texts that I consider to be in the latter category. In each case, I endeavor, to the best of my ability, to argue the case for an Alexandrian provenance not cursorily but at length, carefully explaining my rationale and not leaning on a presumed consensus.

It will be useful to list some of the Christian texts claimed to have been written in second-century Egypt or Alexandria. (The proposed date ranges, of course, both precede and go beyond the second century since datings are rarely precise.) The list is not exhaustive, and I exclude books with a likely *terminus a quo* in the third century (such as the *Teachings of Silvanus* and the *Origin of the World*).⁶⁴ I cite only the most recently scholarly support of a text's Alexandrian provenance, and only when a scholar actually makes an argument about provenance. (All too often, an Alexandrian provenance is stated without argument.⁶⁵) In Table 0.1, I highlight in bold those texts for which I believe a strong case has been made.

The reader must peruse the following chapters to see my arguments.⁶⁶ At this stage, I simply emphasize that – regardless of the strength of my

⁶³ Jörg Frey claims that the *Gospel According to the Hebrews* was written by “Jewish Christians” in Alexandria (“Die Fragmente des Hebräerevangeliums,” in *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung I/1*, 593–606 at 598 [with bibliography on 593]). Yet as Andrew Gregory points out, the earliest references to this gospel (by Papias and Hegesippus) do not suggest an Alexandrian provenance (*The Gospel According to the Hebrews and the Gospel of the Ebionites*, OECGT [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017], 55–56). Internal to the *Gospel According to the Hebrews* there is little that would suggest an Alexandrian origin.

⁶⁴ Matthew Twigg has recently argued for an Alexandrian origin of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Gospel of Philip*, both of which he dates to the third century. See his *The Valentinian Temple: Visions, Revelations, and the Nag Hammadi Apocalypse of Paul* (London: Routledge, 2022), 207–208.

⁶⁵ See the survey of Markus Lang, “Das frühe Ägyptische Christentum: Quellenlage. Forschungslage und-perspektiven,” in *Das Ägyptische Christentum im 2. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilhelm Pratscher, Markus Öhler, and Markus Lang (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2008), 9–44.

⁶⁶ Strong arguments have also been made, in my view, for the following Jewish texts as written in Alexandria: the work of Artapanus, the *Letter of Aristeas*, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, *Joseph and Asenath*, and 2 *Enoch*. See further C. Böttrich, *Das slavische Henochbuch* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995); James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 2.7–34, 889–904; David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Patricia D. Ahearne-Kroll, *Asenath of Egypt: The Composition of a Jewish Narrative* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020), 187–242.

TABLE 0.1 *Proposed Alexandrian texts*

Texts	Scholarly support	Approximate date
<i>Jude</i>	John J. Gunther ¹	90–150 CE
<i>Letter of Barnabas</i>	Claire Rothschild ²	97–135 CE
<i>2 Peter</i>	Wolfgang Grünstäudl ³ ; Jörg Frey ⁴	100–200 CE
<i>Preaching of Peter</i>	Wolfgang Grünstäudl ⁵	100–150 CE
<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>	Wolfgang Grünstäudl ⁶	120–150 CE
<i>Gospel According to the Egyptians</i>	Hans-Josef Klauck ⁷ ; Silke Petersen ⁸ ; Christoph Marksches ⁹	100–160 CE
<i>Concept of Our Great Power</i>	Francis E. Williams ¹⁰	100–200 CE
<i>Exegesis of the Soul</i>	Madeleine Scopello ¹¹	100–200 CE
<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>	Ian Phillip Brown ¹²	100–140 CE
<i>2 Clement</i>	Wilhelm Pratscher ¹³	140–160 CE
<i>Authoritative Teaching</i>	Roelof van den Broek ¹⁴	160–200 CE
<i>Second Treatise of Great Seth</i>	Gregory Riley ¹⁵ ; Louis Painchaud ¹⁶	150–200 CE
<i>Sentences of Sextus</i>	Walter Wilson ¹⁷	150–200 CE
<i>Testimony of Truth</i>	Birger Pearson ¹⁸ ; Klaus Koschorke ¹⁹	150–200 CE
<i>Eugnostus</i>	Anne Pasquier ²⁰	100–200 CE
<i>Gospel of Truth</i>	Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski ²¹	140–170 CE
<i>Apocryphon of John</i>	Karen King ²² ; Birger Pearson ²³	170–230 CE
<i>Acts of John</i>	Eric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli ²⁴	150–200 CE
<i>Protoevangelium of James</i>	Jan Bremmer ²⁵	180–190 CE
<i>Coptic Apocalypse of Peter</i> (NHC VII,3)	Wolfgang Grünstäudl ²⁶	190–300 CE

¹ John J. Gunther, “The Alexandrian Epistle of Jude,” *NTS* 30 (1984): 549–562.

² Clare K. Rothschild, “Ethiopianising the Devil: ὁ μέλας in Barnabas 4,” *NTS* 65 (2019): 223–245.

³ Wolfgang Grünstäudl, *Petrus Alexandrinus: Studien zum historischen und theologischen Ort des zweiten Petrusbriefes*, WUNT 2/353 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 184–296.

⁴ Jörg Frey, “Second Peter in New Perspective,” in *2 Peter and the Apocalypse of Peter: Towards a New Perspective – Radboud Prestige Lectures by Jörg Frey*, ed. Jörg Frey, Matthijs den Dulk and Jan G. van der Watt (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 7–74.

⁵ Grünstäudl, *Petrus Alexandrinus* 90–96.

⁶ Grünstäudl, *Petrus Alexandrinus* 97–143.

⁷ Hans-Josef Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels: An Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 55.

⁸ Silke Petersen, *Zerstört die Werke der Weiblichkeit: Maria Magdalena, Salome und andere Jüngerinnen Jesu in christlich-gnostischen Schriften* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 79.

- ⁹ Marksches, "Das Evangelium nach den Ägyptern," in *Antike christliche Apokryphen I/1*, 661–682 at 679.
- ¹⁰ Francis E. Williams, *Mental Perception: A Commentary on NHC VI,4 – The Concept of Our Great Power*, NHMS 51 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), lxii–lxiv.
- ¹¹ Madeleine Scopello, *L'Exégèse de l'âme. Nag Hammadi Codex (II,6): Introduction, Traduction et Commentaire*, NHS 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 100.
- ¹² Brown, "Where Indeed was the Gospel of Thomas Written? Thomas in Alexandria," *JBL* 138:2 (2019): 451–472.
- ¹³ Wilhelm Pratscher, "Der zweite Clemensbrief als Dokument des ägyptischen Christentums," in *Das ägyptische Christentum im. 2. Jahrhundert 81–100*; Christopher Tuckett lists other scholars who propose an Egyptian provenance for 2 Clement (2 Clement: Introduction, Text and Commentary, Oxford Apostolic Fathers [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 61, n.10). Tuckett himself, however, seems agnostic ("1 and 2 Clement," in *Texts in Contexts: Essays on Dating and Contextualising Writings from the Second and Early Third Centuries*, ed. T. Nicklas, J. Schröter, and J. Verheyden (Leuven: Peeters, 2021), 51–72).
- ¹⁴ Van den Broek, "The Authentikos Logos: A New Document of Christian Platonism," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity*, NHMS 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 206–234.
- ¹⁵ Riley, "Second Treatise of the Great Seth," in *Nag Hammadi Codex VII*, ed. Birger A. Pearson, NHMS 30 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 129–200 at 142–143.
- ¹⁶ Painchaud, *La deuxième Traité du Grand Seth (NHC VII,2)* (Laval: University of Laval, 1982), 5–7. Painchaud places this text in the early third century.
- ¹⁷ Walter T. Wilson, *The Sentences of Sextus* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012), 11.
- ¹⁸ Pearson, *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* 117–118.
- ¹⁹ Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum*, NHS 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 109.
- ²⁰ Anne Pasquier, *Eugnoste, Lettre sur le dieu transcendant (NH III,3 et V,1): Commentaire* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 205–212.
- ²¹ Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Valentinus' Legacy and Polyphony of Voices* (London: Routledge, 2022), 61–79.
- ²² Karen L. King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 9–17.
- ²³ Birger Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 63.
- ²⁴ Junod and Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis. Textus Alii-Commentarius, Indices*, Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1983), 692–700. Their arguments are opposed by Pieter J. Lalleman, *The Acts of John: A Two-Stage Initiation into Johannine Gnosticism* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 256–260. István Czachesz ("Eroticism and Epistemology in the Apocryphal Acts of John," *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 60 [2006]: 59–72) argues for a second edition in Alexandria at the beginning of the third century CE.
- ²⁵ Jan Bremmer, "The Author, Date and Provenance of the Protoevangelium of James," *The Protoevangelium of James*, ed. Jan Bremmer et al., Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha 16 (Leuven: Peeters, 2020), 49–70.
- ²⁶ Grünstäudl, *Petrus Alexandrinus* 168–171.

or anyone else's arguments – positing a text's Alexandrian provenance remains a hypothesis. Thus many of my historical conclusions, though fortified with arguments of various kinds, remain hypothetical. As time moves forward, new data or new interpretations of the data will result in new evaluations. Nonetheless, my overall picture of earliest

Christianity in Alexandria does not depend on the Alexandrian provenance of any single text or even several of the texts highlighted. It rests on a foundation of data derived from known or commonly accepted Alexandrian figures. In the future, I welcome new studies of earliest Alexandrian Christianity based on new and better evidence, or on fresh perspectives on old evidence. The wheel of scholarship is vast, and it will grind on.